



PRESS RELEASE

Embargo to 18th September 2013

Easier path for ratings to get officer certificates

The newest maritime project for the EU looks at efficient ways and options for upgrading ABs to watch-keeping officer. In the UK there is a well proven pathway for this. Elsewhere in Europe the course is confused.

A new research project, code named RANK-UP, has designed and charted a simple course giving an Able Seafarer (Deck) a direct passage to becoming an Officer-in-charge of a Watch. The expertise underpinning this Leonardo da Vinci transfer of innovation project is drawn from trans-national partners in Cyprus, Germany, Latvia and UK. The project is led by Professor Captain Ralph Becker-Heins of the Bremen Shipping University under the guidance of the Latvian Maritime Administration.

The prime objective of RANK-UP is to develop an innovative approach for ratings to upgrade their professional competence by offering the foundation programmes for upgrading that are applicable across trans-national boundaries. Existing competences have been assessed using ECVET¹ <http://www.ecvet-projects.eu> elements and principles. The outcome is a customised scheme of upgrading training, complemented by shipboard placements and distance learning designed to achieve the necessary competence upgrading. The rating will attain qualification at the STCW Convention Operational Level, as revised in 2010.

Materials for training centres (colleges, academies etc) and on-board training have been developed plus a career counselling guide to support ratings who are thinking about becoming officers by way of conversion training.

The exemplary conversion courses have been chosen within the framework of this pilot programme are Practical Navigation, English Preparation and Ship stability. Professor Becker-Heins explains, "These three are selected to cover different competence areas of seafarer's training: Navigation, Communication and Cargo Handling and Stowage. *Stability* is generally a completely new topic for ratings, who might never have got in touch with it before, and has thus been chosen as an exemplary course as well".

Different training possibilities have been considered and described for conversion into e-learning and other distance learning formats. The scope also includes "Standards for Training Centres" who that may wish to start conversion courses for ratings, a "Self-Testing Assessment Test" for trainees who wish to find out in which areas further training is required, a "Training Record Book" for the seagoing time, and a feedback Questionnaire to evaluate the training process.

¹ European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training



These matters were unpacked for delegates at an **International Conference in Riga, Latvia on 17th September 2013**. The event **explored the** key elements of competence for upgrading and how best these can be achieved whilst maintaining a high standard of quality in the outcomes. It was hosted at the Unimars Centre in Riga.

See www.rank-up.eu

For more information contact: admin@rank-up.eu

Note for Editors

This is the seventh in a series of projects that the Partnership has launched under the auspices of National Agencies of the European Union². It is an innovative attempt to increase the recruitment base at a time when there is growing shortage of qualified and competent seagoing staff. The beneficiaries are the personnel themselves and the owners and managers within the European Union maritime sector.

The partner countries in this project are Cyprus, Germany, Latvia and the UK.

The purpose of ECVET is to enable recognition of learners' achievements during periods of mobility by creating a structure, bringing a common language, and stimulating exchanges and mutual trust among VET providers and competent institutions across Europe. In the context of international mobility but also mobility within countries, ECVET aims to support recognition of learning outcomes without extending learners' education and training pathways

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

For more information and photos, contact:

admin@rank-up.eu

Embargo to 18th September 2013

Marine Information Limited

Tel: +44 1403 730420

² Under Ref Transfer of Innovation, Multilateral Projects, Leonardo Da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme Agreement N° 2011-1-LV1-LEO05-02233 EU *Leonardo Da Vinci Programme – Ratings to Officer VET Progression Programme*